

India's National Gay and Lesbian Magazine

# PiNK

—pages

Issue 16, Winter 2013-14

## PARMESH SHAHANI

MAKING BOMBAY GAY...  
EVERYDAY.

## NOLAN LEWIS

LIFE AFTER MR. GAY WORLD  
FOR MR. GAY INDIA

## WHAT LOVE SAYS...

WHEN VIKRAM & ANDREW GOT MARRIED BY A HINDU PRIEST!



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every day will be a Pride Day.



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# FROM THE EDITOR

Last weekend three Indian cities marked LGBT Pride. Hundreds of enthusiastic men and women walked the streets of Bangalore, Delhi and Pune demanding a permanent end to Section 377 and greater equality in general.

It has been four and a half years since the Delhi High Court judgment and progress seems to be frustratingly slow. In the legal arena, we're still waiting for the Supreme Court to take a call. Pride marches just don't seem to be growing any larger, though the number of masks have mercifully reduced. In the workplace, gay employees still seem as closeted as ever, frustrating both gay advocates like Parmesh Shahani- who I interviewed for the cover story- and HR managers in the big MNCs. Colleges and universities seem to be the only place where there is some visible action, and we've to watch that space for more to come. We must recognize as a community that acceptance is a two way process and if we shy away from doing our bit- which essentially means to give up our inhibitions and engage with our family, friends and colleagues on this issue, not much real progress will ever be made.

At Pink Pages, we constantly try our best to provide our readers with quality content and reading experience. As part of this effort, we have revamped the design of the magazine to make it more sleek and reader friendly. Also, a new version of the website has been launched, along with the mobile version as well for the very first time. Even as we are about to complete four years of existence with the next issue, we always appreciate both positive and critical feedback, and are on the lookout for talented writers and designers to work with us!

Udayan Dhar

Editor-in-Chief

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## On the Cover

Parmesh Shahani, Mumbai



# MAKING BOMBAY GAY... EVERYDAY!

UDAYAN DHAR

Parmesh Shahani is one of India's most multifaceted gay public figures.

One day you can read an article of his in Forbes magazine on how LGBT employees can help create more inclusive workplaces in India, another day you can spot him at the Lakme India Fashion week. While you can come across his book 'Gay Bombay' while browsing through a bookstore, you can also see him on the front page of a Mumbai daily advising people on how to buy art. Udayan catches up with Parmesh at his home in Vikhroli right next to the Godrej campus where he works.

**You have multiple interests- but what is it you're most passionate about?**

We live in a complex world.. and I believe it's only those who are interdisciplinary in their interests- whether in their career, or in their personal life can really succeed. That



is why I do not create artificial silos when it comes to deciding my interests. I feel my varied interests all enrich each other. See, one must look at the larger picture. I would say all my interests are indeed very special to me!

### **Why do you think gay employees are still so hesitant to come out in corporate India?**

This is one thing which leaves me very frustrated. I believe there are three reasons for this – Firstly, even though the big MNCs may have gay friendly policies in place, there are very few role models for the gay employees to look up to. Additionally, on part of the organizations, they are concentrating more on the ‘Diversity’ part, and less on the ‘Inclusion’ bit. Thirdly, even LGBT employees need to give up their fear of coming out. Several organizations that I have engaged with on this issue such as Google or Accenture, have made genuine attempts to create a more inclusive environment and gay employees need to take advantage of this.

### **Do you see any progress happening in this area over the next few years?**

I’ll have to say that success can happen only if work happens at both levels. LGBT employees need to stop being so scared. I would say progress has happened, but not fast enough, and I’m a very impatient person- I want change to happen yesterday!

### **What attracted you towards Godrej and what has kept you there through the years?**

I have a very diverse role at Godrej and the challenges that such a role brings everyday keeps me here. One of my key objectives is to drive innovation within the organization at all levels. I help people here re-imagine Godrej for the future. Change must happen in every aspect- in the products we make, how we handle our human capital, and so on.

I’ve helped create avenues for people to come up with innovative ideas for our products and services and also initiated several campus outreach activities to identify and attract the best talent. One of my major projects here has been the Godrej India Culture Lab- which is a space which cross pollinates ideas and people to explore what it means to be Indian and modern. The lab organizes a series of events, mostly in Mumbai, and at the Godrej campus in Vikhroli. There are talks called Friday Fundas that are open to the public. This is a speaker series where we invite interesting people to the Godrej campus to give talks that are free to all – employees and everyone in the city actually, to attend.

### **How do you feel about Bombay?**

Bombay is an idea.. It gives one a sense of hope, helps imagining the impossible.. and much more! Like Suketu Mehta says, it’s a Maximum City- and that’s what I feel about Bombay as well! It’s home in a way that no other city is. Even at New York, while pub-hopping I used to miss the hot jalebis served at Gay Bombay parties!

### **Where is gay India heading over the decade or so?**

I see the struggle progressing at multiple levels. I see reason for both hope and despair. At the social level, we still need to open up and come together as a community that is part of mainstream India. But we have indeed made progress on this front as well over the past few years. At the legal level, we have some great lawyers doing excellent work. But what worries me most is the issue of health in general and HIV in particular. Also, I hope the younger generation of gay people in our cities take cognizance of the struggle and activism of the older generations that has allowed them to have the freedom they are enjoying today- and often taking for granted. I feel they would much rather just dance at a gay party than involve themselves in any form of activism. They also need to be part of the ongoing struggle.

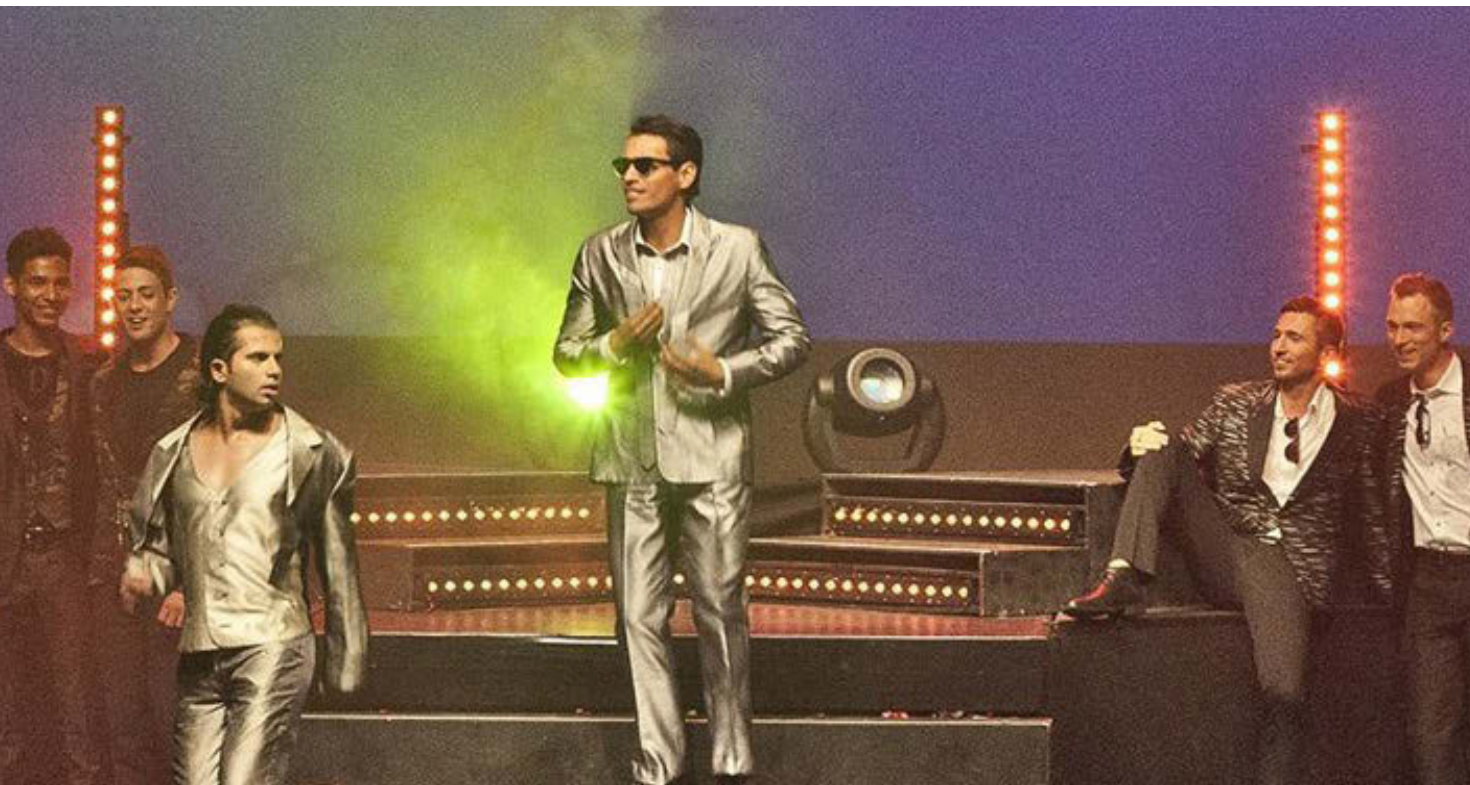


*Bombay is like an idea.. It gives me a sense of hope, helps imagining the impossible....*









# LIFE AFTER MR. GAY WORLD FOR MR. GAY INDIA

NOLAN LEWIS

I just wrapped up a shoot for the “It Gets Better Project,” a campaign will that addresses the high suicide rates among LGBT teenagers, and has all the delegates of Mr. Gay World 2013 involved. We’re almost at the end of the year, and I look back at 2013 and feel that it’s been one of the most rewarding years for me – and it’s all thanks to Mr. Gay World (MGW).

## Chosen!

Until I was actually in Antwerp, Belgium competing at the pageant, I was under the impression that I was probably the only applicant from India this year. It was only whilst I was having an informal chat with Coenie Kukkuk, MGW’s Director for Africa that I was informed that the organization receives hundreds of applications from India each year, and making a choice on who to finally choose as Mr.

Gay India has always been a task. For a country that is still very closeted, India does have daring and brave men who are willing to step forward each year.

Apart from being a part of an amazing experience, I also made some very close friends and met some incredible individuals at MGW13. Judging the competition was the renowned Nigerian LGBT activist Bisi Alimi, Kristof De Busser – the chief





inspector of Antwerp's police force, the famous Filipina celebrity coach Beverly Vergel, among others. The grand finale was hosted by the actress Amaryllis Temmerman and put together by Jerko Bozиковic, a European celeb. It was difficult not to feel enthusiastic with so many energetic individuals around me.

Honestly, I didn't think I'd make it too far into the pageant. While most of the other delegates got "winner treatment" in the sense that since they came from

countries where gay rights are clearly defined, they had their air tickets and wardrobes taken care of. At a time where I should have been working out and preparing myself for a pageant, I was trying put together the finances for my travel and wardrobe because I didn't have any sponsors or national agency backing me up. It seemed a little unfair, and when I reached Antwerp I did feel threatened and insecure looking at the tough competition around me. The men were gorgeous!

//

*Honestly, I didn't think i'd make it too far into the pageant.*



The first day at Antwerp was an induction and a press-conference, where the media got a brief teaser on what the delegates this year were like. In the afternoon, we were given a walking tour of the Antwerp city. It is a quaint and cosy city, and one can walk almost anywhere in twenty minutes. Belgium, like most other European countries is so rich in culture and heritage. What was heart-warming was that homes and restaurants had hung rainbow flags and MGW banners outside their windows to make us feel welcome. Now that's the spirit of Gay Pride!

### **Rainbow Cops LGBT**

On the second day, Kristof De Busser took us to the police academy and had arranged a small surprise for us – a sports challenge! The delegates were shocked to learn that Antwerp had a special team of LGBT police called the “Rainbow Cops LGBT” Coming from a country where the police aren't particularly helpful to gays, it was a breath of fresh-sir to see queer law-enforcers. Especially, the butch lesbian women in their uniforms and short cropped hair looked quite dapper! We were made to go through boot camp and obstacle races, and were treated like cadets at the police academy. Needless to say, at the end of the day we were exhausted and had aching muscles.

### **Looking through Pink Glasses**

“Looking through Pink Glasses” was the Arts Project assigned to us at Mr. Gay World 2013. Each delegate had to present an art exhibit to represent homosexuality in their country. I created a chronological timeline of LGBTI phenomena in India. It looked exactly like a Bollywood poster in technicolor and included LGBTI celebrities like Ashok Row Kavi, Wendell Rodricks, Jackson Netto, Shakuntala Devi, etc. Our exhibits were loved and appreciated so much that they are now a permanent exhibit at the LGBTI archive of Antwerp.

### **The Grand Finale**

After long and endless dress rehearsals, the grand finale was held at the Elckerlyc theatre. We rehearsed and were choreographed to the Baywatch theme for the swimsuit round, a Lady Gaga medley to the club wear round and even mimicked a gay wedding ceremony, for the final business wear round. Wendell Rodricks designed a beautiful lime green Indian jacket that I wore at the pageant. The actual pageant felt like a rollercoaster ride because we were dancing, changing into our next costume in a matter of minutes and then were back on the stage dancing again. We didn't have enough time to breathe. It was exhilarating!



## Top Ten!

At the end of the pageant, Christopher Olwage from New Zealand was declared as Mr. Gay World 2013. I couldn't possibly think of a better winner. Chris is compassionate and a beautiful human being. Being a professional ballet dancer, he has this grace and poise that just emanates from him and is very regal.

I didn't win but I did make it to the top ten finalists. That to me is a huge accomplishment because I didn't even expect to make through the quarter final given my circumstances. I was just happy to have made it that far. I'd set a new record for LGBTI India.

## Mr. Gay India

I left an impression on the judges and directors at MGW. Before I returned to India they did ask me if I'd like to be the National Director for India. My job would be to organize a gay pageant here in India so that we would have one delegate representing India at Mr. Gay World through a proper competition every year. I loved the idea because if we had a local agency taking care of the ground work like finances, air tickets and wardrobe, the actual winner could just go on to focusing on the finer aspects of the pageant – like getting into shape and studying to be an Indian LGBTI spokesperson.

## Aftermath

I got my happy ending. I returned to a country where I had friends and family were patting me on the back and congratulating me.

I think MGW13 was my coming of age. MGW has changed my life in so many ways. As of today, I am Mr. Gay India 2013, but I am also 'Founder - Mr. Gay World India.' The amount of international recog-

nition and appreciation I have received has been overwhelming. Magazines and TV channels all the way from Amsterdam to Australia were interested in what LGBT India has to say, and I'm honoured to be one of the spokespersons for the same.

**B&O Amazing Cruises** has appointed me as their Indian Brand Ambassador. B&O Amazing Cruises offers cruises custom-made to meet the needs of the gay and lesbian traveller. LGBT travel is still a fairly new concept in India. Also, without divulging too many details, I'll be starring in a film with an acclaimed international filmmaker soon. Look out for me in a cinema near you sometime next year!

## Pride

One of my family's main concerns before I left for the pageant was about our safety. We still live in a country with a volatile and unpredictable political and social atmosphere. What if there was backlash of any sort. Even though I'm bold and daring, I still had concerns about the welfare of my family.

But here I am today, typing out this note, with a smile on my face. No, the sky didn't fall on my head like I thought it would and there was no negativity and hate from anyone. We truly are moving towards becoming a safer space for the gay community, no matter how slow the pace of progress may seem.

If I could do a gay pageant openly, I'm sure "coming out" may not seem as difficult as many of you think. I came out on the pages of the National daily to an entire country. If my actions only inspire some of you to live a life that is more open and free, I'll consider it a job well done.



*I got my happy ending. I returned to a country where I had friends and family were patting me on the back and congratulating me.*



# LOVE SAYS TO ME

VIKRAM KOLMANNSSKOG

**G**ay marriages are becoming increasingly legalised and recognised globally. Andrew is British and Caribbean. Vikram is Norwegian and Indian. They got married in Oslo, Norway, with a Hindu priest conducting part of the ceremonies. Here is a revised excerpt of Vikram's wedding speech.

Every night my parents and I sang a good night prayer. It was a Norwegian, Christian prayer, Dear God, I am well, thank you for everything I have been given, you are good, you care for me, protect the little and the big, ending with Amen as Christian prayers do. But after Amen my mum added the names of some Hindu gods, asking that they too may protect us. For a while I thought

Amen was one of the gods. Amen, Ayu, Shankerdada, Lirbai raksha karjo. We then said good night and I love you to each other. Having said and heard that, I was safe to enter the night.

Love says to me: You are safe; we are here together, in all that is uncertain and frightening.

Pappa, I could ask you any question. If you did not have the answer, we had a big encyclopaedia we consulted together. I thank you not just for the knowledge, but for being there with me. That is a feeling that remains, your presence. And more than knowledge, I thank you for the encouragement to find my own answers to important questions in life. I am inspired by your





*I do - every time I hold  
Andrew's hand in public,  
even in oslo, even  
today.*

service as a medical doctor, professor and father; your humbleness and peaceful manner, surely the greatest wisdom there is. Even before you met Andrew I knew that you would get along.

Love says to me: Be peaceful, humble and ever grateful; the greatest servant is the greatest master.

Mamma, I thank you for how you have welcomed Andrew. I lied to myself for many years, trying to convince myself I was not gay. When I first told you, I remember you saying that you were worried about all the prejudice and challenges I would face, that you wanted an easy life for me. I have told you since and I tell all of you now, that I embrace being gay. Not everyone has the opportunity to be courageous and truthful every day. I do – every time I hold Andrew's hand in public, even in Oslo, even today. Belonging to ethnic and sexual minorities has increased my compassion for myself and others and the passion to address any injustice and oppression I see. Mamma, you also taught me to fight. I came home from school one day. I don't know if I had been bullied or what had happened. You said fight back, and suggested I learn martial arts. I did. I do.

Love says to me: Stand up for yourself; don't hide. Be brave and truthful. Be beautiful. Fight all injustice and oppression you can find.

Chandaben, we only met this year at a cousin's wedding. I remember how you performed the Hindu rituals with love.

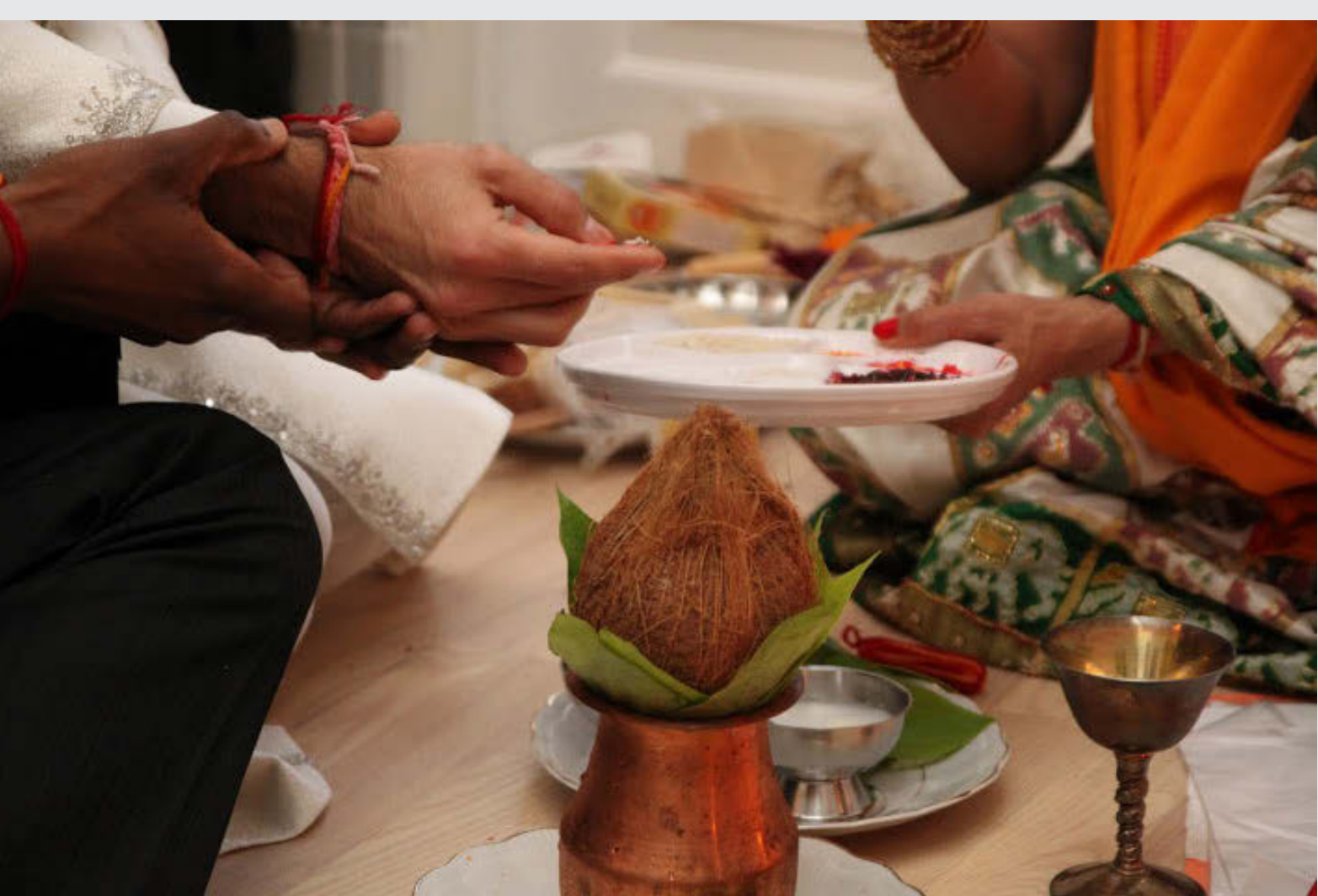
Afterwards you asked me, are you looking for a nice girl? I answered – as love had taught me to be brave – I am actually already with a man I love. That is wonderful, you said, and you gave me your blessings. Since then we have been friends. Thank you for the fire ceremony this morning and for your presence here!

Love says to me: I am your ritual, your first and your last ritual. Fruits, statues, mantras, all these things can help, but they are only things without me; without me, the fire will not burn.

I would like to say something about many more of you, for there are so many family members and friends that are significant to me here. And others are here in spirit. I imagine Andrew's mother standing in a red dress in the corner. We had some brief but beautiful moments together before you passed away earlier this year. I felt fully accepted as a son-in-law. You were looking forward to our wedding. You introduced me to your African and Caribbean friends as Andrew's fiancé. Even at your weakest, you were also strong. I still wear the jumper I used to borrow from you. It is like a warm embrace.

Love says to me: I am an ever-expanding circle. I am community. Longing and belonging. I am home.

Andrew, it has now been five years since I fell in love while studying law in London. On Tuesday 9 January 2007 at half past midnight, we had communicated on an Internet chat site for



*Love says to me: I can contain them all, all experiences and emotions, all aspects of you and the other.*

more than a week but had still not met. I had hardly slept the night before because I had been thinking of you. I quote from my message to you:

My day:

- 1) Spilt coffee on my shirt on my way to LSE where I met some friends for more coffee.
- 2) Thinking of you.
- 3) Fell asleep every two minutes in my lecture. I have a piece of paper, which is blank except for the words "concept of migration" in my bag.
- 4) Thinking of you.
- 5) Had a microwavable dinner again and spilt some of the sauce on the already stained wall-to-wall carpet – no coordination.
- 6) Thinking of you.
- 7) Cancelled meeting up with a friend for beer. Instead I have tried to read about terrorism, thinking mostly of love and sleep, or falling slowly into both.
- 8) Thinking of you.

9) Had a cigarette looking at the TATE; only the sound of the building breathing.  
10) Writing to you, while you are somewhere out there in the same city sleeping. I can only imagine how beautiful you must look sleeping in your bed.

A few days later we finally met in the Elements bar. I was a bit late and had been walking fast so my heart was already racing when I saw you. You were on a leather chair next to a small table. Light shirt, black jacket, loose jeans. Good looking. I remember thinking, oh-oh, too good-looking. Still I think I get to marry the handsomest man I can imagine.

Love says to me: I am brilliant body, excited and intimate.

Do you remember our first morning together? We went to a shop. I queued for the Sunday papers while you got in the line to pay for food and other things. You were standing there talking to the lady in



the till when I glanced over at you and when I finished paying a few minutes later. Did you know her? I asked. No, you said. I looked at you. She was considering becoming a teacher like me so we talked about that, you said. It still astonishes me how you make everyone feel so welcome that they open up and talk to you about all that is important to them.

One day you visited me with a definition. You were reading M. Scott Peck's *The Road Less Travelled*. I skimmed through it as you were sleeping one morning. Love is the will to extend oneself in order to nurture one's own or another's spiritual growth.

Love says to me: You will grow in a spiritual relationship. Do not expect to always have the same feelings for each other or always be happy. But always work for increased awareness. After you have fallen in love, make sure you rise in love.

A relationship carries the risk of rigid roles. I have had to take back some projections about you being calm and always positive and me being the temperamental and neurotic one, and rather allow us both to be full persons. We are doing this together. Expanding. This year has been emotional for both of us, particularly with your mother passing away, and we have become fuller persons with each other. I have also been calm and happy, you have also been sad and fiery.

Love says to me: I can contain them all, all experiences and emotions, all aspects of you and the other. I am this accepting awareness, inside and all around. Have faith in me. Rest in me.

Last year I made some important decisions. I said an important no, a courageous and clear no. I quit a PhD in law. My no was unconventional and not fully understood by everyone, but you, Andrew, were there throughout the process.

Love says to me: I openly question. I openly listen. True dialogue, this is where I arise, letting you be clearly you.

Last year there was also an important yes. I decided I wanted to propose to you. You decided to accept. It was spring. The most beautiful graveyard in Oslo was an ocean of blue flowers. That is where and when it happened. We have some very brief moments here together in this form. I do not know what was before or what comes after.

Love says to me: Death is a dear friend. A breath, a whisper: be present for this moment. Dare to live your life, dare to love.

(Vikram is a writer, psychotherapist and human rights lawyer)



## ISHKonnect Survey

Do you want an app that's for MSM in Greater Mumbai and Thane? If so, please take at least 30 minutes to complete this important survey. A team of researchers from India and the United States are collaborating on an important study called "ISHKonnect." The study aims to assess the sexual health and attitudes of MSM and TG/hijra in Greater Mumbai/Thane who meet guys online.

Please go to this link to take the survey: <http://tinyurl.com/ISHKonnect>

Your personal information will be kept confidential. In order to thank you for your time, we are offering a Rs. 300 e-coupon for Queer Ink. Please send questions to [ishkonnect@umn.edu](mailto:ishkonnect@umn.edu).



*Please go to this  
link to take the  
survey:*

*[http://tinyurl.com/  
ISHKonnect](http://tinyurl.com/ISHKonnect)*

# WINTER'S HERE - GET IN SHAPE!



By Randeep Singh  
For Men's Life Today

**S**o you spent the entire summer under the AC, with a cold drink in your hand. Winter's here and now you notice that you've got big love handles escaping the sides of your pants! So what do you do to get fit again? Here's our five-point program, whether you're in the chilly foggy North or a balmy pleasant South.

**1.**

**Stretch and stretch some more**

– A lot of guys who want to get fit quick head straight for the dumbbells. “Bad idea,” says Krishna Kumar, fitness specialist and personal instructor based in Delhi. “Always start your workout sessions with lots of stretches. In fact, you could go the army way and concentrate more on stretches than heavy weight workouts,” says Krishna.





Apart from warming up your muscles, stretches can also help with muscular strength. Do a hamstring stretch where you stand and try to touch your toes. You can flex your knees a bit but don't over-exert yourself while touching your toes.

Also try the upper back stretch by holding your hands over your head. Rotate your shoulders forward to really get a good stretch for your upper back. Hold the stretch for a slow count to ten and feel your body thank you.

2.

**Watch what you are eating –**

Yes, you've heard it lots of times, but it still holds true - you are what you eat. Quit starchy, oily chips and all that street food you've been gorging on. While you're at it, cut down on carbs after 7 p.m. Replace your usual source of carbohydrates with good carbs like the kind you find in potatoes and oatmeal. "Eat egg whites and fish for proteins or pulses if you are vegetarian. Go for apples, grapefruit and berries for fibre. And most importantly, have 4 to 6 small meals a day. That will keep your metabolism stoked all day," advises nutritionist Dr. Vaibhav Singh. And remember to have proteins in all these meals. Carbohydrates should be reserved only for before and after a workout. Supplement your diet with probiotics to keep your stomach healthy. One way to do this is to include regular doses of yoghurt in your diet. Feel those muscles under the layer of fat already?

3.

**Run, Walk, Cycle, Burpees –**

Nothing can replace a good cardiovascular workout and if you are looking to get fit, you need at least a 20 minute session every day. Pick your favorite cardio activity and stick to it. Run, cycle or walk fast. Swimming is not an option if you are in the cold North, but replace it with a run through the mist. Not just will it burn fat, it will also keep you warm. "Do activities that get your heart rate up real quick. That will help burn a lot of body fat real quick. Burpees are the best option," says Krishna. A burpee is a full body exercise performed

in four steps. Begin in standing position, then drop into a squat position with your hands on the ground, kick back your feet to a pushup position. Immediately return your feet to squat position and then leap up as high as you can. Do these real fast and about 10 times to begin with. Feel those fat cells burning? Good.

4.

**Do more at home –** That's right, get working on those household chores. "Simple tasks like cleaning your room, dusting, switching furniture or changing curtains

actually burn a lot of calories. Since you are more focused on getting the work done rather than the time or effort spent, you actually end up burning more fat," says Krishna. For example, 30 minutes of digging in your garden is equivalent to 30 minutes on a treadmill. Even the most mundane of jobs like washing your car could burn more than what you would on a cycle for the same amount. So the next

5.

time your mother or girlfriend asks for help around the house, take it up gladly.

**Winter fitness tricks –** If you can't beat the weather, then find a way to use it to your advantage. Indulge in some winter sport that will get your heart racing. If the cold is not helping you get out of your cosy blanket, then use sport as an excuse. But remember to get a good night's sleep. Sleep deprivation is known to cause weight gain. Try turning down the temperature of your shower. The colder the water gets, the more alert you will get. Exposing the body to the cold will also help boost metabolism and burn calories. Just make sure you don't overdo it. Get a healthy dose of Vitamin D that you are missing from the hiding sun by eating fish, eggs and milk. Repeat all these points all winter and by the time summer arrives and those clothes come off, you will be ready to reveal a fitter, leaner and meaner you.

Randeep Singh has been a men's lifestyle journalist for over a decade. He is a regular contributor to Maxim, FHM and Man's World.



# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO WINTER DRESSING



By Apoorva Prasad  
For Men's Life Today

**W**inter's finally here, and a cool breeze is blowing away all that hot dust in the northern plains. But in the colder northern part of the country, it can get really cold. So what are you supposed to do, apart from pulling on your grandma's "woolens and mittens"?

As the legendary British explorer Sir Rannulph Fiennes once said, "there's no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing". There are many clothing options today, which are lightweight, very warm, and windproof. Whether you live in Delhi or Drass, it's time to get your winter look on! Here is how:

1.

**Dress in layers** – The most important thing to remember during the cold season is to dress in layers. Winter temps in India can range from a balmy 30 degrees, to a bone-chilling - 25 degrees in the mountains!

In northern cities like Delhi, "generally it's hot during the day and cold at night, so layering is a good idea," says Akaaro's designer Gaurav Jai Gupta. For a laid-back option, "I'd go for a T-shirt and jumper, to be comfortable for the whole day".



For younger, collegiate types, a T-shirt and hoody is one option, says Gupta. On the other hand, a more classic look would be layering a shirt with a sweater and/or a blazer, depending on the temperature.

2.

**Dress for your activity** – If you're going to be active, make sure you wear technical fabrics, says Mohit Oberoi, outdoor athlete and owner of Adventure 18, an outdoor clothing and equipment retail chain. "Technical fabrics -- made from man-made fibres -- wick away the sweat from your body, which makes sure you don't get damp and cold". So if you're playing tennis out, wear a tech T-shirt, not a cotton one. Cotton absorbs sweat and becomes damp and heavy. This is fine for summers, when you need to be constantly wet to cool down. But in winters it's uncomfortable at best, and unhealthy to deadly at worst.

On the other hand, if you're going to just be sitting around or hanging out with friends, anything warm works -- from fleece pullovers to wool blazers.

3.

**Fleece or wool? Twenty-first century fabrics** – Remember your old and itchy woollen sweaters? There's a reason you were cold and uncomfortable in them. Today's fabrics include super-warm and lightweight polar fleeces, which mimic the softness and warmth of good quality wool, but weigh much, much less. Brands like Patagonia use recycled PET bottles to make their fleeces, making it the fabric of choice for eco-friendly and vegan users.

But is wool dead? Not at all. "Wool is very a classic fabric", says Gupta. "In India, we have local weavers in Kullu and Manali, creating great fabrics in muted colours, in mohair and yak wool". In particular, Gupta thinks yak wool is a great alternative, because it is more resistant to water. Also, Australian and New Zealand brands are also promoting Merino wool, a much softer and finer fabric than old-school wool.

The bottom line is, both polar fleeces and wool will keep you warm -- but you have to be choosier about the kind of wool you get.

4.

**Don't forget a jacket** – If you're stepping out for the day, make sure you carry some kind of jacket. More than the ambient temperature, it's the cold wind that really bites. So you need a wind-blocking garment -- be it a bomber leather jacket, or a nylon wind-cheater, or a lined blazer.

One new type of garment that filtering into everyday life from the mountaineering and trekking world is the softshell. "A softshell is basically a windproof, water-resistant fleece, that allows your body to breathe well, but blocks wind and light rain easily", says Oberoi. And if you're heading into the mountains for a winter vacation, you might want something even more high-tech -- such as waterproof/breatheable hardshell jackets. These completely block all outside moisture and wind, while still allowing your body to breathe -- a critical factor in mountain sports. Many brands now use the same high-tech materials for everyday clothing.

So there you have it -- appropriate clothing to beat the winter, no matter how bad the weather!

Apoorva Prasad is the managing editor of Men's Life Today India, and has written for Maxim, Men's Health, Gizmodo, Outlook Traveller among various other publications. He's also spent a long time staying warm in cold places.





# THE BUZZ

NEWS, VIEWS &  
REVIEWS FROM  
ACROSS THE GLOBE

## POLITICS

### HAWAII OKAYS GAY MARRIAGE

Hawaii legislators gave final approval to a marriage equality bill on 12 November, ending what has been one of the longest journeys for marriage equality so far. "After 20 years of work to win the state where it all started, the Hawaii freedom to marry victory today is especially sweet," said Evan Wolfson in a statement. He's founder and president of the national group Freedom to Marry who as a lawyer with Lambda Legal argued for marriage equality in a 1990s lawsuit. Wolfson said the wait "shows how far we have come."

## GAY HISTORY

### TEL AVIV MONUMENT TO REMEMBER HOMOSEXUALS PERSECUTED BY NAZIS

Tel Aviv is going ahead with a plan to

install a monument to the gay community persecuted by the Nazis, memorializing thousands of homosexual men who were murdered in death camps. The memorial is designed to be a concrete triangular slab embossed with a smaller pink triangle, reminiscent of the symbol that the Nazis forced gay men to wear on their clothes.

A park bench and plaque will provide information about the 50,000 gay men who were convicted under Paragraph 175 of the Nazi penal code, which banned homosexual relations. Between 7,000 and 10,000 were sent to their deaths for the crime during the Third Reich. The monument is slated to be placed in Gan Meir, a park at the center of Tel Aviv's LGBT community. Tel Aviv has over recent years become noted as one of the world's most gay-friendly cities, with a popular pride parade and thriving LGBT community.

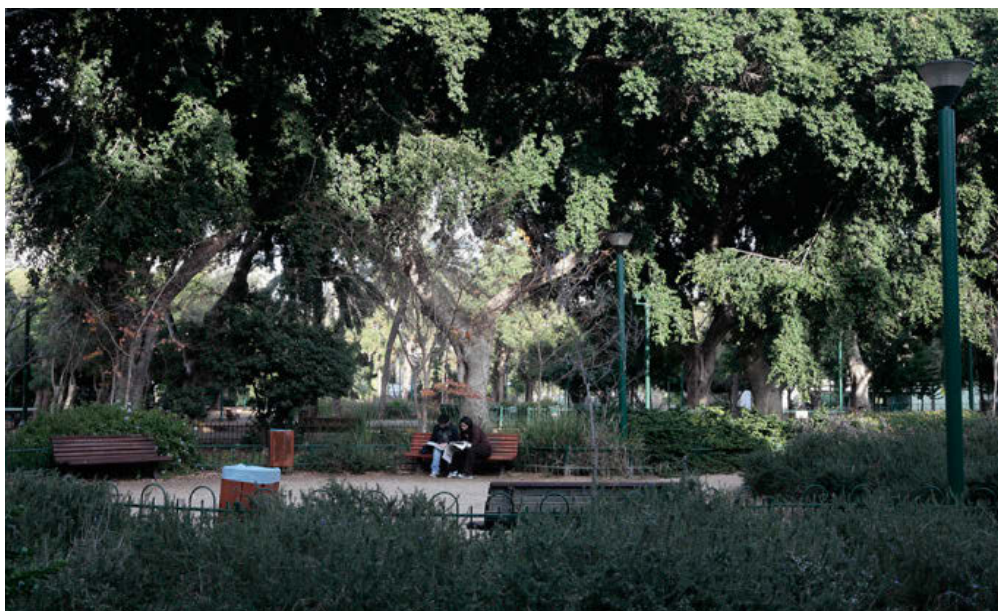
## ENTERTAINMENT

### JIM PARSONS IS OUT ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

OUT magazine has named the Big Bang Theory lead actor as its Entertainer of the Year in its annual 'OUT 100' listing. "I was very conscious in 2013 to try to enjoy every month, every week at a time, as much as I could," Parsons told OUT, coming off his third Emmy win for Lead Actor in a Comedy Series for The Big Bang Theory. Following the sixth season of the TV series, he filmed the Ryan Murphy-directed version of The Normal Heart for HBO.

In a recent New York Times profile, it was rather casually mentioned that Parsons is gay. He describes the reaction as minor Internet-related chatter. "I didn't think it was still that much hoopla, and that was really kind of rewarding. That's progress





— progress I'm really happy to be a part of, making what was extraordinary ordinary without being boring, for God's sake."

## TELEVISION

### 'LOOKING' ON HBO RELEASING ON JAN 19

HBO's upcoming gay themed series 'Looking' is already creating a buzz since its promos were released on Youtube

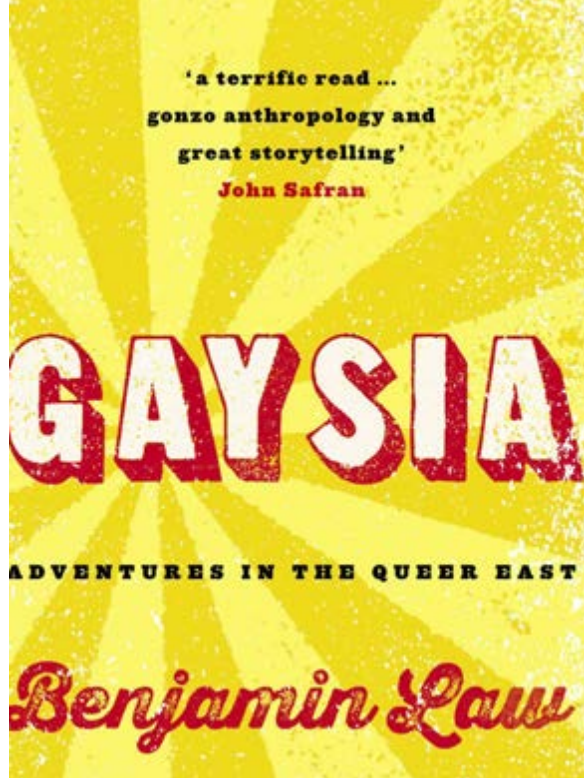
recently. Pepped as the queer version of SATC, it offers up the unfiltered experiences of three close friends living - and loving - in modern-day San Francisco. Friendship may bind them, but each is at a markedly different point in his journey: Patrick (Jonathan Groff) is the 29-year-old video game designer getting back into the dating world in the wake of his ex's engagement; aspiring artist Agustín (Frankie J. Alvarez), 31, is questioning the idea of monogamy amid a move to domesticate with his boyfriend; and the

group's oldest member -- longtime waiter Dom (Murray Bartlett), 39 -- is facing middle age with romantic and professional dreams still unfulfilled.

## WEB SERIES

### 'HUSBANDS' RELEASES SEASON3 WORLDWIDE

Among the latest string of off-stream gay themed web series that have been hitting audiences with their on-the-face



unapologetic queer humor, 'Husbands' featuring a gay couple that get married in an inebriated state in Las Vegas has been serenaded with flattering viewership numbers as well as critical endorsements. The producers describe it as a "story with a classic premise, as told in a marriage equalized-world". Now, unlike the first two seasons, which were initially released only for North American audiences, the new third season has got a global release and available for viewing on their website.

## BOOKS: NEW RELEASES

### **GAYSIA: ADVENTURE IN THE QUEER EAST, BY BENJAMIN LAW**

Published by Random House, Rs 350 paperback

Benjamin Law, Australian by birth takes an in-depth look at resorts for gay nudists in Bali; transexualism and three formal genders in Thailand; China's underground gay resistance; Japan and 'the most breathtakingly messed-up porn'; religious fundamentalists of all persuasions keen on 'curing' homosexuality in Malaysia; sex workers and the spread of HIV in Myanmar; and the decriminalization of homosexuality, gay pride parades and encounters with gay royalty and a popular spiritual guru in India in this new book on queer Asia.

### **BREAKING THE BINARY**

Published by LABIA Collective, Rs 100 paperback

Through this research study, based on 50 life history narratives, the LABIA (Lesbians and Bisexuals in Action) Collective explores the circumstances and situa-

tions of queer PAGFB (persons assigned gender female at birth) who are made to, or expected to fit into society's norms around gender and sexuality. They look at their experiences with natal families and in school; and chart their journey through intimate relationships and jobs; they attempt to understand what happens to them in public spaces, and how they are treated by various state agencies; also discovering where they seek and find support, community, and a refuge from the violence and discrimination that mark far too many lives. Reading their varied articulations of their own gender gives the reader new insights into gender itself. It helps envision bits of a new gender system that challenges the existing hierarchical, discrete, binary scheme and urgently proposes its transformation into an equal, porous, multiple arrangement.





# LEGAL LIFT

KSHITIJ BANSAL

**T**his new section is your guide to all law related queries for LGBT Indians. To post your own query, send an email to [contact@mingle.org.in](mailto:contact@mingle.org.in) with 'Legal Query' in the subject line.

Content Courtesy: Legal Counselor at Mission for Indian Gay & Lesbian Empowerment. Please visit [www.Mingle.org.in](http://www.Mingle.org.in) for more details.

**Is the Delhi High Court Judgment on Section 377 applicable all over India? Can I be arrested for consensual gay sex outside Delhi? If I am, what sort of Legal Proceeding can I undertake?**

The Judgment passed by the Delhi High court is applicable in the entire country

as in this case a central legislation was read down by the court, though normally a High Court's jurisdiction extends to its own state, so technically speaking, if any homosexual act takes place between two adults in private places (not in public places, because the same is still an offence under section 377 of I.P.C.) whether in Delhi or in any other state that should not make any difference.

Legally no person shall be arrested if he/she engages in any sort of homosexual act in private. In case of any arrest one can file a writ of Habeas Corpus in the concerned High Court and pray for immediate release. Further one can claim compensation from the government for illegal detention.

**What is the age of consent for**

**gay sex in India?**

The age of consent in India has been specifically given as 18 years or above, this is in accordance with the Judgment passed by the Delhi High Court in the Naz Foundation v. Govt of NCT [WP(C) 7455/2001]. There is no dispute on this point of law as the judgment is clear on this point. (See. Para 132 of the Judgment). Further the Judgment shall operate as law so long as the Parliament does not pass any legislation on this aspect.

Though there are some legislations like Indian Succession Act, Guardianship and Wards Act and many others where the age of majority varies. But with regards to Section 377 of the IPC, the judgment of Delhi HC shall prevail which sets the age as 18.



# PRIDE - 2013

PICTURES BY ROBINDRO SAIKHOM

Three Indian cities- Delhi, Bangalore and Pune- celebrated LGBT Pride on 24th November.

In Delhi, nearly a thousand people marched from Barakhamba Road to Tolstoy Marg holding a huge Rainbow flag. This was the sixth year of the Delhi Queer Pride, and the focus of the organizers was on Section 377- with the Supreme Court judgement expected to be out anyday now.

In Bangalore, 700-800 people participated enthusiastically in the Pride march which started at the City Railway Station and walked towards Town Hall and Corporation Circle. Despite intermittent rains, participants managed to keep up the spirit of Pride. The march saw active participation from corporates based in the city- such as IBM and Goldman Sachs, who sent their LGBT employees with company sponsored banners and T shirts.

In Pune, which celebrated the third Pride

event this year, nearly 150 people participated in the march primarily organized by the Sampathik Trust. The high point of the day was when Sr. Inspector Barge gifted flowers to Bindumadhav Khire- the President of Sampathik Trust, and other marchers.

Featured here are some snapshots of the Pride march in Delhi by Robindro Saikhom.



# The Indian LGBT Youth LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

15-16 Feb 2014, Mumbai



Mission for Indian Gay & Lesbian Empowerment



Do you have a VISION  
for yourself..  
& India's LGBT Community?

Being held in India for the first time, the LGBT Youth Leadership Summit is a pioneering initiative primarily aimed at identifying and grooming high potential individuals within the LGBT youth of India, and preparing them for future leadership roles.

A two day action packed event in the financial and cultural hub of India, this summit promises to be a great opportunity for bright young people to come together on a single national-level platform, interact among one another, as well as with successful role models from the Indian LGBT community and beyond. If you're an LGBT identified Indian citizen between ages 18-25, you can submit your application here:

**[www.Mingle.org.in/Leadership](http://www.Mingle.org.in/Leadership)**

